



# Greater Yellowstone Coalition

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EXHIBIT 21  
DATE 1-29-09  
HB 253

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 253**  
**Amy McNamara, National Park Program Director**  
**Greater Yellowstone Coalition**

**January 29, 2009**

On behalf of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, I urge you to support House Bill 253 – an act that will return bison management to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Montana's wildlife management programs are the envy of wildlife enthusiasts and hunters across the country. However, when it comes to bison management, this is not the case. This year the Legislature has an opportunity to begin to turn that record around by recognizing bison as valued, native wildlife and by entrusting the wildlife professionals at Fish, Wildlife, & Parks with bison management once again.

Montanans are often given a false choice: to managing bison as wildlife or protect the state's livestock industry. Montana can have both.

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition supports both of those outcomes and has over the years worked to reduce potential conflicts between bison and livestock. This has included paying for fencing and financially supporting willing-seller agreements to remove livestock from high-risk areas to insure that bison have necessary winter range outside of Yellowstone's boundaries while not putting livestock at risk.

This bill continues to insure that private property rights and Montana's valued brucellosis-free status are protected by supporting the continued cooperation of the Department of Livestock and the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks in bison management.

A well-managed, regulated hunt is part of any long-term sustainable solution to bison management. Right now, the Department of Livestock has the final say when it comes to bison hunting. This authority should be returned to the wildlife professionals at Fish, Wildlife & Parks. By passing this legislation, the Legislature will make it clear that the State of Montana values all big game species, including bison.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 253 and for the opportunity to share our support of bison being managed by wildlife professionals.

*People protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, now and for future generations.*

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